

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES
September 14, 2006

Members Present: Tom McAuley (Vice Chair), Barbara Sutherland, Susan Whitbourne, Ed Kaler, David Yaukey, Daniel Clapp

Absent: Elsie Fetterman, Rosemary Kofler, Doris Holden

Select Board Liaison: absent

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator), Jeanette Miller (Program Assistant)

Guests: Larry Shaffer (Town Manager), Jean Haggerty (Liaison to the Comprehensive Planning Committee), Marge Babb

Welcome:

Tom McAuley, Vice Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Minutes of June Meeting:

The minutes of the July 13, 2006 were accepted. There was no August meeting.

Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:

Doris Holden was absent from the meeting and there was no report.

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome New Member:

Tom introduced new member Dan Clapp, a volunteer for the noontime Meals on Wheels program and retired physician. Each COA member followed with a self-introduction and brief summary of personal experience.

Welcome New Town Manager, Larry Shaffer:

Larry introduced himself and his background. He is looking forward to working with the community and wants to know what he can do to help the Council on Aging achieve its mission.

Long Range Planning Overview (Alan Root):

Alan did not show up for the meeting and the item was skipped.

International Transportation Network (Jane Diamond):

Ms. Diamond could not attend the meeting.

MCOA Conference October 11, 12, & 13:

The annual fall conference of the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging is being held at the Sea Crest Resort and Conference Center in Falmouth, Mass. Three staff members are attending this important conference and a hand out was given to COA members with the details. Nancy explained that there is no money in the Senior Center budget for conferences. The cost of going to this conference is estimated at \$1,128.28. Nancy wants the Town to realize that conferences and trainings are important to the Senior Center staff and this cost will be taken out of the Senior Center budget even though there is no line item. Nancy asked the COA to consider donating \$1,000 out of the Senior Trust to the Senior Center Program Account. (The Senior Trust balance as of the July report is \$77,797.19).

COA members agreed that this is a good idea and voted unanimously to transfer the full amount of the conference, presently estimated to be \$1,128.28, from the Senior Trust to the Program Account. This figure will be finalized after the gas and toll costs are known.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

Jean Haggerty gave an update on the importance of the Comprehensive Plan. The committee is aiming for a complete Town involvement in the process and it is hoped that all will voice their say in the plan. A series of five idea gatherings are scheduled in October so that any ideas can be recorded and the people will have input in the Town's Master Plan.

Jean stated that she will be tendering her resignation as the Council on Aging Liaison for reasons of personal health, use of available time and a personal prioritization of community involvements. She asked that the COA consider member-at-large, Alan Root, as the COA liaison. Nancy extended her gratitude to Jean for her tireless efforts as the Council's liaison and stressed the importance of the need for baby boomers to be included in the Master Plan. She said that a flyer prepared by the Planning Department will go out in the October/November Senior Spirit advertising the important October meetings to gather ideas. The Council agreed to consider Jean's recommendation of Alan Root as their liaison to the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

Parking Sub-Committee:

Ed Kaler gave a brief introduction as to what are the parking issues at the Bangs Center. He passed out notes from the Parking Sub-Committee with the issues, and ideas and suggestions on handicapped parking spaces, the Ann Whalen House parking spaces, special parking for those seniors with financial need, and a draft parking needs survey for adults 55+ participating in senior programs at the Bangs Center.

A discussion ensued on how to put together a survey that will get the information needed to properly assess the parking situation and the needs. Town Manager, Larry Shaffer, stated that there is a real issue with a survey if you do not ask the right questions or get a response from the right people. The information could be skewed. He suggested that the Senior Center look at the data that they already have regarding how many people attend their programs, when they attend programs, if they walk or drive to the Senior Center, and what parking is available. Then make suggestions based on this data. The requests and suggestions should go to the Select Board and then to the Parking Task Force. The Council members agreed that this is a better way to gather information rather than a survey.

Highland Valley Elder Services:

Barbara attended the last meeting of Highland Valley Elder Services on September 11th. Barbara reported that they were impressed with the Amherst Senior Center's proposed new program for a Counseling Center for seniors. The Amherst Senior Center applied for a Title III grant for counseling support and training and approval is expected shortly. It is expected to receive approximately \$15,600.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

COA October Retreat:

The COA Retreat will be held October 19th, from 9 AM to 1 PM in Room 101 of the Bangs Community Center. Nancy and Susan are planning a nice morning that will include our regular business meeting and lunch. Professor Shewe, UMass Professor of Marketing, and COA member and Professor Susan Whitbourne, will conduct the retreat which will focus on the need to market for people 55 and older and anticipating approaching the future. Susan will talk on demographic trends and issue of mental health and values. Nancy is planning a lunch and would appreciate any help or suggestions.

Friends Update:

The Town Council has not yet filed the proposal to form the Friends Group. It has to be approved by the Attorney General. Once that is done we can begin fundraising again. The Town Manager asked Nancy to provide him with the information on this matter and he will see what he can do to push it along with Town Counsel.

COA Representative to the 250th Anniversary Committee:

The 250th Anniversary Committee needs a representative from the COA. This is important so that older people's interests are accommodated in the festivities. David Yaukey volunteered to be the COA representative.

Report of Special Municipal Employee Seminar for Boards and Committees:

David Yaukey attended this seminar which explained the Special Municipal Employee designation. COA members are considered Special Municipal Employees, a designation which is given by the Select Board. This designation is not given to an individual but to a board or committee as a whole. The seminar was a bit difficult to follow as it was a question and answer format. The one message that he got from the seminar is "if in doubt if you are in conflict of interest, ask." Larry Shaffer commented that the biggest problem that arises is a person who has a business and is also on a board or committee that is before that board or committee you or your firm wishes to represent.

COA STAFF REPORTS**Counseling Center Update:**

Maura updated the members on the Counseling Center that is proposed for the Senior Center. There are going to be four doctoral students in the Senior Center space who will offer counseling services to elders. It will be free as it is funded by Title III money. She has had some calls from elders who are already interested in coming into use the service. The counseling center grant request is for approximately \$15,600, and is an addendum to the Title III Grant which funds our lunch program and caregivers support group.

Grace:

Nancy is planning to have a celebration for Grace Thayer, who will be 100 years old on November 5th. Details are uncertain and will be adjusted according to what her health allows.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.

The next COA meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19, 2006, followed by the COA/Staff Retreat.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Erman, Administrative Assistant